

Resolution 21-104, CD1 Testimony

MISC. COM. 352

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Friday, May 28, 2021 2:30 PM
Subject: Council Testimony

Written Testimony

Name Colby Takeda
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Meeting Date 05-28-2021
Council/PH Committee Council
Agenda Item Resolution 21-104, CD1
Your position on the matter Support
Representing Organization Self

Written Testimony

Digital equity is essential to helping residents of all ages, abilities, ethnicities, and income levels thrive. By increasing access to critical resources, communication tools, and online activities, we can positively develop Honolulu into an age-friendly city, boost economic activity, build social connections, and increase population health. Together, public, private, and nonprofit entities must work together with the community to develop the necessary engineering, education, and encouragement strategies to address the digital divide. Thank you for this opportunity to support Resolution 21-104, CD1.

Testimony Attachment

Accept Terms and Agreement 1

IP: 192.168.200.67



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE OF HAWAII



KAPI'OLANI
PALI MOMI
STRAUB
WILCOX



Kamehameha Schools



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS



Sustainable Energy
Hawaii



Papa Ola Lokahi
Kaua'i, Oahu, Maui, Hawaii



HAWAIIKIDSCAN

Honolulu City Council Regular Meeting

Date: Wednesday, June 2, 2021
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Where: City Council Chamber

RE: RESOLUTION 21-104 CD1 – Relating to the digital equity declaration.

Aloha mai e Chair Waters, Vice Chair Kia'āina, and Councilmembers,

The listed organizations and individuals **SUPPORT Resolution 21-104 CD1**, which supports and adopts the goals set forth in the Broadband Hui's Digital Equity Declaration and Hawaii Broadband Strategic Plan.

Over the past year, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic. Through the work of the Broadband Hui, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

Looking to that future, much work remains ahead. It will take an ongoing commitment and collaboration from public and private partners to deliver on the goals set forth to address Hawai'i's digital inequities and to leverage the opportunities enabled by improved digital access.

We recognize this resolution supports the aspirational goals of the Broadband Hui's Digital Equity Declaration and we believe that addressing digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally-enabled societal systems is one of our greatest opportunities for economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience.

For these reasons, we kindly request you **PASS Resolution 21-104 CD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see names on the following page.)

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OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Administrative Testimony

Testimony of Sylvia M. Hussey, Ed.D.

Ka Pouhana, Chief Executive Officer

Honolulu City Council

RESOLUTION 21-104 CD1

**SUPPORTING DIGITAL EQUITY AND URGING DEVELOPMENT OF BROADBAND
INFRASTRUCTURE TO BOLSTER COVID-19 RECOVERY AND FOSTER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

June 2, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Council Chambers

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** Resolution No. 21-104 CD1, which would support and adopt the goals set forth in the State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's (DBEDT's) Digital Equity Declaration and the Hawai'i Broadband Strategic Plan on broadband and digital inequity issues published by DBEDT in November 2020. **OHA believes that the digital equity this measure seeks to promote, including the development of broadband infrastructure necessary for equitable access in the digital age, will be of particular benefit to Native Hawaiian community members.**

The Digital Equity Declaration defines "digital equity" as the information technology capacity of Hawai'i residents to fully participate in society, democracy, and economy across a range of areas; provides data and examples of digital inequity in health, education, business and economics, culture and the arts, and other areas with a focus on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) data; and outlines community priorities through the articulation of measurable short and long-term goals.

The Digital Equity Declaration accordingly reflects and aligns with OHA's concerns regarding the need for greater digital equity for the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, anecdotal reports from community groups and other data suggest that having no or limited access to digital devices or a sufficient internet connection may disproportionately impact NHPI students (twice as many as the general population).¹ Further, while HIDOE has distributed devices to public school students, many have been returned by NHPI families because they have no broadband connectivity.² Moreover, the Charter School Commission recently conducted a COVID-19/learning loss school survey and 75% of the respondents who said that 51% or more of their students are in danger of failing were in rural, high poverty areas where many NHPI families

¹ HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TEACHER AND STUDENT DISTANCE-LEARNING SURVEY (2020), *available at* <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Preliminary%20Summary%20of%20Findings%20for%20Teacher%20and%20Student%20Distance%20Learning%20Survey.pdf>.

² *Id.* at 3.

reside, and where broadband access may be limited.³ For higher education students, digital literacy is becoming more essential for those seeking to work in a range of industries, and digital equity may be essential to providing all Hawai'i students with the opportunity to cultivate the skills necessary to pursue successful careers, while remaining in their home islands and communities.

In addition to education concerns, addressing current and future inequities in access to broadband services and digital devices, as envisioned in the Declaration, will further the interests of Native Hawaiians in other areas. For example, the Declaration's culture/arts goal of putting Hawai'i's collections online, making them available to students and residents across Ka Pae 'Āina, would serve to increase engagement in and the perpetuation of cultural practices, values, and knowledge, and bring source materials to learners who do not live on O'ahu or have easy access to Bishop Museum. Crucially, telehealth will only be expanding in the coming years and digital equity will provide greater opportunities to those who want or need access to telehealth services, particularly in rural areas with high populations of Native Hawaiians and limited broadband infrastructure.

In light of OHA's consistent advocacy for the education, cultural access, and health care needs of Native Hawaiians, the OHA Administration signed on to the Declaration of Digital Equity.

This resolution's call for the adoption of the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration aligns with OHA's concerns regarding the need for greater digital equity for NHPI communities, as particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, as the COVID-19 pandemic has further heightened the demand for reliable, affordable internet connectivity with work, education, civic engagement, and healthcare services being shifted online, the need to address digital inequities has become even more urgent. Recognizing the need for digital equity, including by addressing current and future infrastructure needs, will mitigate the disproportionate impacts of digital inequities on NHPI communities, and otherwise further the interests of OHA's beneficiaries.

Accordingly, OHA respectfully urges the Council to **ADOPT** Resolution No. 21-104-CD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

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³ HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TEACHER AND STUDENT DISTANCE-LEARNING SURVEY (2020), *available at* <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/DOE%20Forms/Preliminary%20Summary%20of%20Findings%20for%20Teacher%20and%20Student%20Distance%20Learning%20Survey.pdf>.